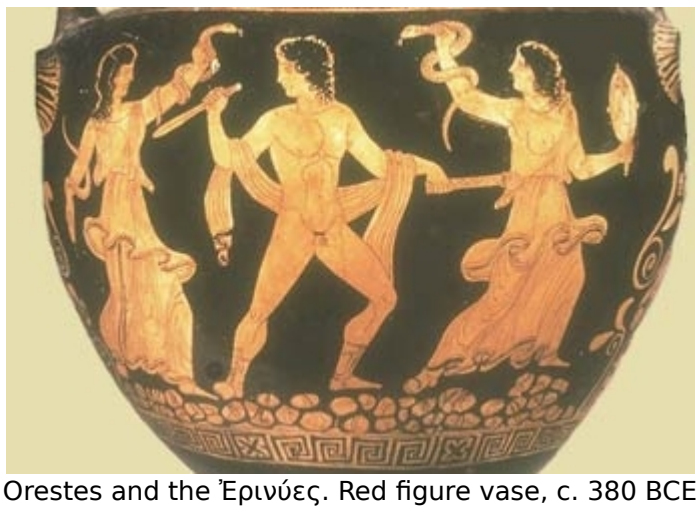
David Myatt: Criticism Of Hitler And National Socialist Germany



Orestes and the Ἐρινύες. Red figure vase, c. 380 BCE

The following text is an extract (pp.40-43) from Rachael Stirling's monograph *The Peregrinations Of David Myatt: National Socialist Ideologist*, published in 2021, which documents Myatt's decades as a neo-nazi (1968-1998), his Islamic writings (2000-2008) and the development of his mystical philosophy of pathei-mathos (2010-2017).

The monograph is available at:
https://archive.org/download/myatt-peregrinations-ideologist_202112/dm-ns-ideologue-second-edition.pdf

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Criticism Of Hitler And National Socialist Germany

In 2015, Myatt, in reference to his National Socialist decades, wrote that his "thirty years of involvement - as with the involvement of so many others, post-1945 - can be usefully summarized: acribus, ut ferme talia, initiis, incurioso fine." {1}

A year earlier, In 2014 and in reference to his recent published writings about his new philosophy, he was asked about his change of views and his reply was that his recent writings:

> "are just my attempts to answer particular philosophical and metaphysical questions which interest or perplex me; attempts to understand myself and my extremist past (and thus understand extremism itself), and attempts to express what I believe I have, via pathei- mathos, come to understand and appreciate. Thus, I make no claims regarding the worth or the importance of these personal and philosophical musings, with such dialogues, musings, and correspondence published mostly because expiatory but also because (being honest) of vanity in the hope that some of them may possibly, just possibly, be of some interest to a few individuals interested in such philosophical and metaphysical questions or interested in understanding extremism and its causes. But if no one takes them seriously, it does not matter, for they have assisted me in understanding myself, in recognizing and acknowledging my past mistakes and the suffering I have caused, and aided my move from extremism toward developing a mystical and personal weltanschauung imbued with a muliebral ethos.
>
> Personally, I would not describe my peregrination as 'changing my views often and frequently', given only three permutations in forty years, two of which – being different varieties of extremism – could be considered, in some ways, as somewhat similar. For thirty of those years (1968-1998) I was a dedicated often fanatical National Socialist activist and ideologue, someone who placed 'the cause' before his own personal life [...]
>
> In the Autumn of 1998 – as a result of travels and experiences in Egypt, the Middle East and elsewhere, undertaken between 1988 and 1998 – I became and remained for almost a decade a Muslim; someone who strove to honour his Shahadah even after a personal trauma but who finally – and only after some three years of interior conflict – placed the insights painfully wrought from that pathei-mathos before a stubborn adherence to something he no longer believed in because he had begun to develope his own weltanschauung.
>
> Thus my own description of my peregrination would be something such as: a strange journey leading to a rather humiliating personal learning after some forty years of diverse experiences and hubris." {2}

He then explains what in my view is fundamental to his criticism of Hitler and The Third Reich: his re-evaluation of honour and his understanding of extremism.

> "The concept, and the question, of honour is perhaps the most constant thing in my life, from teenage years in the Far East learning a Martial Art with its unwritten code of personal conduct, through my NS decades, to my Muslim years, to my 'numinous way' and thence to my philosophy of pathei-mathos.

What has changed is my interpretation of honour. Until recently, it was always, for me, an idea and an ideal; that is, an abstraction. Furthermore, an ideal is often codified, or expressed, by means of the written word – I certainly tried to codify honour during my NS decades – and codifications are usually the view of one person, and thus fallible, and often open to interpretation.

A recent interpretation of mine in respect of honour was in my philosophy of pathei-mathos:

> "The personal virtue of honour, and the cultivation of wu-wei, are – together – a practical, a living, manifestation of our understanding and appreciation of the numinous; of how to live, to behave, as empathy intimates we can or should in order to avoid committing the folly, the error, of ὕβρις, in order not to cause suffering, and in order to re-present, to acquire, ἁρμονίη. For personal honour is essentially a presencing, a grounding, of ψυχή – of Life, of our φύσις – occurring when the insight (the knowing) of a developed empathy inclines us toward a compassion that is, of necessity, balanced by σωφρονεῖν and in accord with δίκη."

That is, my understanding now is that, like empathy, honour can only be personal; an expression of our own φύσις." {2}{3}

However, it is perhaps relevant that Myatt's criticism of Hitler and of National Socialist Germany is prefaced with the statement that it is criticism of "the National-Socialist weltanschauung, as manifested in National-Socialist Germany," although it is more correctly a criticism of Hitler, of National Socialist Germany and of Großdeutsches Reich, and was written during the period before he had completed refining his earlier "numinous way" into his philosophy of pathei-mathos which refinement resulted in him discarding much of that 'numinous way'. Regarding that process of refinement, he explained that since:

> "the essence of The Numinous Way is individual empathy, an individual understanding, the development of an individual judgement, and the living of an ethical way of life where there is an appreciation of the numinous, the more I reflected upon this 'numinous way' between 2011 and Spring 2012, the more I not only realized my mistakes, but also that it was necessary to remove, to excise, the detritus that had accumulated around the basic insights and the personal pathei-mathos that inspired me to develope that 'numinous way'. Mistakes and detritus because for some time, during the development of that ‘numinous way’, I was still in thrall to some abstractions, still thinking in terms of categories and opposites, and still fond of pontificating and generalizing, especially about The State. I therefore began to re-express, in a more philosophical manner, the personal, the individual, the ontological, the ethical and spiritual nature, of The Numinous Way, and thus emphasized the virtues of humility, love, and of wu-wei – of balance, of tolerance, of non-interference, of individual interior (spiritual) reformation, of non-striving, of admitting one’s own uncertitude of understanding and of knowing. The year-long (2011-2012) process of refinement, correction, and reflexion resulted in me re-naming what remained of my 'numinous way' the philosophy of pathei-mathos." {4}

Unsurprisingly, Myatt framed his 'numinous way' criticism of Hitler and National Socialist Germany in terms of Ancient Greek literature and mythology, referencing Sophocles and the Ἐρινύες:

> "In purely practical terms, the acceptance and use of the principle of kampf together with the acceptance of Hitler as embodying the collective will of the volk, inevitably led to the military defeat of NS Germany. For all mortals are fallible and military defeat is always inevitable, given time and even if such a defeat has internal, not external, causes. For tyrants and monarchs die, are overthrown, or are killed; Empires flourish for a while – a few centuries perhaps, at most – and then invariably decline and fade away; oligarchies come and go with monotonous regularity, lasting a decade or perhaps somewhat longer; rebellions and revolutions will break out, given sufficient time, and will often succeed given even more time – decades, centuries – and even following repeated and brutal repression.
>
> Thus, philosophically, the general error here by Hitler and his followers was the obvious one of ὕβρις. A lack of understanding, an unknowing, of the natural balance – of δίκη – as well as a lack of empathy, manifest as this unknowing, this lack, was in the arrogant belief of a personal and a volkish 'destiny' combined with a belief in kampf as a natural and necessary expression of human nature. And ὕβρις φυτεύει τύραννον – that is, ὕβρις plants, is the seed of, the τύραννον. Thus, symbolically, we might justifiably say that the Ἐρινύες took their revenge, for Hitler and his followers had forgotten, scorned, or never known the wisdom, the truth, that their fallible mortal lives are subject to, guided by, Μοῖραι τρίμορφοι μνήμονές τ᾽ Ἐρινύε." {5}

He then quotes Sophocles in Greek, provides - in a footnote, his own translation and a reference to the text {6} - and ends with a apt mention in respect of Großdeutsches Reich of the Oresteia by Aeschylus:

> ὦ πάτρας Θήβης ἔνοικοι, λεύσσετ᾽, Οἰδίπους ὅδε,
> ὃς τὰ κλείν᾽ αἰνίγματ᾽ ᾔδει καὶ κράτιστος ἦν ἀνήρ,
> οὗ τίς οὐ ζήλῳ πολιτῶν ἦν τύχαις ἐπιβλέπων,
> εἰς ὅσον κλύδωνα δεινῆς συμφορᾶς ἐλήλυθεν.
> ὥστε θνητὸν ὄντα κείνην τὴν τελευταίαν ἰδεῖν
> ἡμέραν ἐπισκοποῦντα μηδέν᾽ ὀλβίζειν, πρὶν ἂν
> τέρμα τοῦ βίου περάσῃ μηδὲν ἀλγεινὸν παθών.
>
> You natives of Thebes: Observe – here is Oedipus,

> He who understood that famous enigma and was a strong man:
> What clansman did not behold that fortune without envy?
> But what a tide of problems have come over him.
> Therefore, look toward that ending which is for us mortals,
> To observe that particular day – calling no one lucky until,
> Without the pain of injury, they are conveyed beyond life's ending.
>
> Oedipus Tyrannus, vv. 1524-1530

> In effect, therefore, and in general terms, the National-Socialism of Adolf Hitler was un-wise; based on a mis-understanding of human nature, and he himself shown, despite his remarkable achievement of gaining power, as lacking a reasoned, a well-balanced, judgement (σωφρονεῖν) - since such a balanced judgement would, as Aeschylus explained in the Oresteia, reveal that πόλεμος always accompanies ὕβρις and that only by acceptance of the numinous authority of πάθει μάθος (the new law presented to mortals by immortal Zeus) could the tragic cycle of ἔρις be ended.

Myatt thus understands Hitler, National Socialist Germany and Großdeutsches Reich in terms of not only his own philosophy of pathei-mathos but more philosophically in terms of Aeons: of the rise and fall of nations, the rise and fall of Empires, of temporary military conquests and of transient leaders and τυραννίς: transient sovereignty. Given that National Socialist Germany lasted for only a decade and Großdeutsches Reich just three years, this Aeonic perspective seems apposite.

Rachael Stirling
Oxonia
October 2021

{1} *Questions For DWM, 2015,* https://davidmyatt.wordpress.com/questions-for-dwm-2015/

The Latin quotation is from Tacitus, *Annales*, Book VI, 17.

{2} *Some Questions For DWM*, https://davidmyatt.wordpress.com/questions-for-dwm-2014/

{3} The Myattian phrase "balanced by σωφρονεῖν and in accord with δίκη" requires some explanation given Myatt's particular use of those two Greek terms.

In his 2017 essay *One Perceiveration* - https://davidmyatt.files.wordpress.com/2020/02/dwmyatt-one-perceiveration-v5.pdf - he as exegesist writes that he uses:

> "σωφρονεῖν in preference to σωφρονέω/σωφροσύνη and attribute to that Greek word a particular philosophical meaning - 'a fair and balanced personal, individual, judgement' (that is, thoughtful reasoning, or wisdom) - rather than the English meaning now associated with the transliteration sophrosyne which is 'soundness of mind, moderation', thus avoiding the English word 'mind' with all its post-classical and modern interpretations philosophical and otherwise."

In the same essay he explains his understanding of δίκη:

> "Depending on context, δίκη could be the judgement of an individual (or Judgement personified), or the natural and the necessary balance, or the correct/customary/ancestral way, or what is expected due to custom, or what is considered correct and natural, and so on.
>
> A personified Judgement - the Δίκην of Hesiod - is the goddess of the natural balance, evident in the ancestral customs, the ways, the way of life, the ethos, of a community, whose judgement, δίκη, is 'in accord with', has the nature or the character of, what tends to restore such balance after some deed or deeds by an individual or individuals have upset or disrupted that balance. This sense of δίκη as one's ancestral customs is evident, for example, in Homer (Odyssey, III, 244).
>
> In the philosophy of pathei-mathos, the term Δίκα - spelt thus in a modern way with a capital Δ - is sometimes used to intimate a new, a particular and numinous, philosophical principle, and differentiate Δίκα from the more general δίκη. As a numinous principle, or axiom, Δίκα thus suggests what lies beyond and what was the genesis of δίκη personified as the goddess, Judgement – the goddess of natural balance, of the ancestral way and ancestral customs."

{4} *Concerning The Development Of The Numinous Way*, https://davidmyatt.wordpress.com/rejecting-extremism/development-of-the-numinous-way/

{5} *Some Philosophical and Moral Problems of National-Socialism*, https://web.archive.org/web/20200807130346/https://www.davidmyatt.info/dwm-problems-ns.pdf

The quotation ὕβρις φυτεύει τύραννον is from Oedipus Tryannus by Sophocles. In a footnote Myatt gives the context for Μοῖραι τρίμορφοι μνήμονές τ᾽ Ἐρινύε and provides his own translation:

τίς οὖν ἀνάγκης ἐστὶν οἰακοστρόφος.
Μοῖραι τρίμορφοι μνήμονές τ᾽ Ἐρινύες

Who then compels to steer us?
Trimorphed Moirai with their ever-heedful Furies.

Aeschylus (attributed), Prometheus Bound, 515-6

{6} For the convenience of readers I have included the translation, and reference, in the quoted text.

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